

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR DADDY?

A WWII memoir of John F. Cramer, Jr

April 15, 1993

One of the most important events of my life, also one of the most important events in the history of our country was on Dec 7, 1941---the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The war had been going on in Europe for over two years, and was in the forefront of most of our minds, but the Japanese attack came as a tremendous shock, and coalesced the country into a sense of unity and purpose that I've never seen before or since.

I remember very well the day that it happened. There had been a school dance the night before and I'd been up late and so slept in that Sunday morning. When I came downstairs at 9:30 or so I found my dad with a stricken look on his face listening to the radio and my mother crying. When I heard what had happened I had an overwhelming emotional urge to join up and fight.

Although the urge to fight lasted for a long time, I was persuaded that it would be better for me if I continued in school until I was needed. These were the same feelings I had earlier about the Spanish Civil war only much stronger. Then I was caught up in the romance of joining the George Washington brigade and fighting the fascists in Spain.

From the time of Pearl Harbor on the war pervaded every aspect of American life. The whole country was revving up to a gigantic war effort--an effort that was the primary focus of almost everyone's life. I'm not going to go into any detail about what the home front was like in WWII--but if your interested I have a good book on it in my library.

As far as I personally was concerned from the time of Pearl Harbor on I was simply marking time until I went into the army, but, of course, life did go on for me at the University of Oregon.

At that time the U of O had a total enrollment of 3500 students and it was possible to know, at least by sight, almost everyone on the campus. That was in the middle of the big band era, and five or six times during the year one of the big bands would come and play for an all campus dance in Mac Court. I don't think that I ever heard Glen Miller live, but I did hear many of the other famous big bands such as Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Bob Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Artie Shaw, and others.

I was a history major and took as many courses in that field as I could as well as English lit, French, math etc. My favorite professors were in the history dept, particularly Gordon Wright who later moved to Stanford where he was one of Dick's professors.

In the summer of '42 I worked in Medford for the plumbing subcontractor on the Camp White project. I made \$.95 per hr which seemed like a fabulous wage to me. The job ran out in the middle of August and I came back to Eugene and worked in the cannery canning beets at \$.45 per hr until school started again.

In the spring of '42 I pledged Theta Chi fraternity and moved into the house in the fall. I enjoyed my fraternity experience and learned some of the social niceties that I hadn't known before. I had earned enough during the summer to pay all of my school expenses including my house bills. As I recall, my house bills were \$48 per month; tuition was \$35 per quarter and books about \$10. That fall I joined the Army Air Force cadet program which meant that I would go on active duty as soon as there was a place in the training program for me.

I received my active duty orders that winter, actually leaving Portland in a troop train on my birthday, Feb 26, 1943. My first station was Fresno Calif. where the Army had taken over the county fair grounds. I was there for six weeks of basic training--or boot camp. It was a hard and strange life and it was a great relief to finish and to move on to a CTD--Cadet Training Detachment at Ellensburg, Wash.

I was at Ellensburg about another six weeks. The program there was primarily academic--intensive courses in math, meteorology, etc, as well as a lot of rugged physical training.

From Ellensburg we were shipped down to Santa Ana, Calif. for preflight training. This was cadet training at its worst (or best, depending on your point of view) Discipline was exacting and the academic and physical training very demanding. Most classroom work here dealt with navigation, aircraft engines, theory of flight, aircraft identification, etc. Here we also took tests to determine our aptitude for training as pilots, bombardiers, or navigators. I qualified for all three and chose pilot training.

From Santa Ana I went to King City Calif for primary flying training and from there to Gardner Field near Taft Calif. for basic, and from there to Williams Field at Chandler Ariz. for advanced.

I had a very traumatic experience at Williams. I was washed out of the program. This happened just before Christmas 1943 and has to have been one of the lowest points in my life. At that time

I had the option of staying in the AAF as an enlisted man, or to go back to Santa Ana and take another run at the cadet program as a navigator or bombardier. I chose the latter alternative.

In retrospect it was just as well that I washed out. Williams was a training base for P-38 fighter pilots. The P-38 was a twin engine, twin boom airplane that was beautiful to look at, but had a poor record in combat. Many of my friends and classmates at Williams did not survive the war.

After I washed out at Williams, I was given a 10 day leave and hitch-hiked home to Eugene. It was good to get home for a few days, but it seemed very strange. All of my friends were gone and there were just a scattering of men left on the campus.

I went back to Santa Ana and after several weeks was reassigned for training as a navigator at Hondo AAB which was about 40 miles from San Antonio

It was tough to go from advanced flying school back to being a "freshman" cadet again, but I survived. Up to this time many of the fellows I was with I'd started out with at Fresno, but I didn't know a soul at Hondo. Most of the cadets there were from the east or midwest, hardly any from the west.

We trained in AT-11's which were twin engine planes with cabin space for a pilot, copilot and 6 cadets. Most of our flying was at low level and the heat and bounces caused a very high incidence of air sickness. I've always had a strong stomach though, and it didn't seem to bother me.

San Antonio was an interesting historic city and I was able to visit there a number of times. While there I enjoyed visiting several times with my great aunt Fern (my Dad's aunt) and her husband Martin.

The training at Hondo was intensive and there were many washouts. I finished in the spring of 1944 and received my wings and 2nd Lt bars.

We were given another short leave or delay in route to our next station. (mine was to the radar navigation training school at Boca Raton, Fla.). I didn't have time to go home because it was impossible to get air transportation at that time, so I went to see my brother Bill who was with the 104th (Timber wolf) infantry division in training at Camp Carson, Colo. We had a good couple of days together and I headed off via the railroad to Florida. Train travel was no fun in those days. It was slow and the trains were terribly crowded. It took several days and nights to make the trip and I sat up or stood up the whole way.

The six weeks or so in Boca Raton were a pleasant interlude. I was stationed at the Boca Raton Club, which in peace time was an exclusive private club. The duty was not too rigorous and it

was fun being a 2nd Lt. rather than a lowly cadet. Most of our flying was in B17's and B24's out over the "Devils triangle" (that name for that part of the Atlantic came much later) I learned how to operate the APQ-13 radar set to go along with my other navigational skills in dead reckoning, Loran and celestial.

Upon completion of the radar course I was ordered to Lincoln AAB, Lincoln Neb. for assignment and after being there for 2 or 3 weeks I was assigned to the 9th group which was in training at McCook AAB, McCook Neb. This was the outfit that I stayed with until the end of the war.

I was assigned as navigator on the crew of John D. Fleming of the 5th Squadron. John D. was from Columbia, Tenn, the "mule capital" of the world (according to him). He was a skillful pilot, but hard drinking and a real womanizer. He claimed that one of his conquests was Dinah Shore when they were both freshmen at Vanderbilt. He was kicked out of Vanderbilt and later from Ole Miss. I would have liked him better and been more tolerant of him now than I was then. At that time his life style was miles apart from my rather straight laced value system.

My copilot was Chuck Chauncey from Chanute Kans. He came from a Wasp background similar to mine. We were very compatible and good friends. He wrote almost every night to his girl Jayne, just as I did to my girl, Barbara.

Bombardier was Julius J. (Chip) Chilipka of Polish-Catholic background from New York City. Chip had gone a couple of years to Fordham, and was the type of fellow that every body loved to kid. He was intelligent tho, and a good bombardier.

I can no longer remember the names of all of the enlisted men on the crew. The radio operator was Roncace a Porto Rican, Brandt, a tall blonde Scandinavian was one of the side gunners and Goldman a Jewish boy from New York City was ring gunner. I can't remember the names of the radar operator, tail gunner or the other side gunner altho I can see their faces in my mind's eye. The flight engineer's name was Prushko. Our ground crew chief's name was "Curley" Klaboe and he was from Kalispell, Montana.

Of course I made many other good friends in the 9th Group including my good and true friend Tom Bowen. Tom and I were two of very few Oregonians in the outfit and were drawn to each other both because we liked each other and we shared the secret of where God's country was. Since we met we've had a lot of fun together, leaned on each other during times of personal crisis and remained the best of friends through thick and thin.

We were in training at McCook from Sept through Dec 1944. Much of our flying was in B-17's rather than B-29's and involved simulated long range strikes on various cities in the mid west. A lot of it involved navigation "under the hood". The navigator was not allowed to look at any of the pilotage landmarks but was

confined to the use of celestial, dead reckoning, radar, etc. It wasn't much fun, particularly since the pilot and co-pilot sat up with a pilotage map in their laps laughing at every mistake.

What was fun was our trip to Cuba for overwater navigational training. It was marvelous to go from a Nebraska winter to that balmy easy going life of Cuba. We worked hard, but we enjoyed ourselves too--particularly a couple of weekend trips to Havana. Havana was a gay, wide open city and a soldier couldn't have asked for a better place to spend a weekend

We brought back a bomb bay full of Seagrams VO, Havana cigars nylons, and Chanel #5, all of which were almost impossible to get in the US during the war.

We were scheduled to go overseas, crew by crew in January after picking up our airplanes in Herrington Kansas. Before that, however the colonel wangled us a few days leave. Those of us who lived on the west coast flew out to San Fransisco in a B-17 and then I took a train to Portland. On our return trip we lost an engine on take off at Mills field (now SF International Airport) and crashed beside the runway. Fortunately, we hadn't gained much altitude and no one was hurt, although the plane was wrecked. We had to return via train to Denver and from there by bus to McCook. It was a long, hard trip, particularly the bus portion. We didn't have a seat the entire trip and were exhausted by the time we got to McCook.

A few days later the whole Group moved by train to Herrington Kans. We picked up our airplane there--a brand new B29 made in the Boeing plant at Wichita Kans which we subsequently named "Goin Jessie". We were there only a few days, checking out the various systems and calibrating the compasses and other navigational equipment. We then flew to Mather Field, near Sacramento Ca. where we received sealed orders for overseas.

Our orders directed us to the 313th Wing at Tinian in the Marianas Islands via Hawaii and Kwajelain. We landed at John Rodgers Field in Honolulu and because of engine trouble our crew was there for a week. Hawaii was nothing like it is now--it was one vast military camp. There were no high rise hotels along Waikiki, just the old Royal Hawaiian and Moana, both of which had been taken over by the military.

With a new engine, our flight to Tinian via Kwajelain was uneventful. Tinian had been secure only a few months and many battle scars remained. It was about the size of Manhattan Island and the Seabeas laid out the street system to match Manhattan's. North Field on the northern end of the island was for a time in 1945 the largest air field in the world in terms of air traffic handled. It had four 10,000 foot runways and was home base to two wings of the 20th Air Force. Later another field was constructed near the center of the island and another wing based there. There were also wings based on Saipan and Guam. Organizationally , an

AAF wing at that time was comparable to an infantry division.

Our quarters were a couple of miles from the field. The mess halls and a few other buildings were wooden, but our living quarters were tents for the first couple of months. After that we moved into quonset huts.

The night we arrived in Tinian, Tokyo Rose dedicated a special number to "Col. Huglin and the officers and men of the 9th Bomb Group which had just arrived on Tinian"

It was not long before we were in action. Our first two strikes were comparatively easy compared to what followed. The first was to Iwo Jima and the second to Truk. Both of these and our first few strikes on the home islands were high altitude formation attacks. Our squadron consisted of a formation of 10 to 12 B29's and the Group was composed of three squadrons. The idea of attacking in formation was to provide mutual protection against fighters and the tighter the formation the better, since it discouraged fighters from diving through the formation.

Although the B29 was designed for, and all of our training was directed towards, high altitude precision bombing, it did not work out well over the Japanese home islands. This was principally because of two factors: the jet stream (which we discovered) and foul weather. It was not unusual to encounter 200 knot winds at 30,000 feet over Tokyo and this combined with only occasional glimpses of the target made precision bombing almost impossible.

Another factor was the terrific fuel consumption required to carry a load of bombs up to 30,000 feet. It took the equivalent of a RR tank car of gasoline for each B29 to fly a high altitude strike over Japan. This latter factor was particularly important to Gen. Curtis LeMay who came out from the 8th Air Force to take command of the 20th.

Gen LeMay was a tough hombre and was the model for the colonel in both "Command Decision" and "12 O'Clock High" both about the 8th Air Force attacks on Schweinfurt and Regensburg.

Overnight LeMay revolutionized our whole strategy and battle tactics. Instead of high altitude precision bombing in formation, we would attack alone, at night, at low altitude (6000--8000 feet). Instead of carrying 4 tons of high explosive bombs, we carried 20 tons of incendiaries.

We were loaded to the maximum and sometimes beyond and as a result it was disastrous to lose power on take off. This happened often though, and there was seldom a maximum effort strike that there wasn't a tall column of smoke from the end of the runway in north field, or across the channel a few miles away on Saipan, from a crashed B29. Later on when we were mining harbors and inland sea, the whole island would shake as the mines would go off one by one after a B29 crashed at the end of the runway

Combat was demanding mentally, physically and emotionally. Our running time was from 13 to 18 hours, practically all over water, and in every case having to go through at least one weather front. In the course of my 35 strikes we hit every major city in Japan at least once, some several times. In addition we hit some smaller cities, such as Wakayama, airfields in Kyushu during the invasion of Okinawa, and flew several mining missions.

Our crew was awarded the DFC for a strike at Nagoya. We lost an engine about 200 miles from the target, but decided to go on in anyway. Our crew had never aborted a mission and we hated to have come that far and not get credit for a strike and also sully our record. It was a foolhardy thing to do, but young men are foolhardy--which is why young men, not old men fight wars. Because our speed was decreased we were the last over the target and every gun and search light in Nagoya was on us, but miraculously we got out without taking any serious hits.

The worst was yet to come. About an hour out of Nagoya we lost a second engine. We had about 1200 miles to go over water. In order to keep up our flying speed we had to push the throttles on the two remaining engine all the way forward. This meant no margin of error and a very high rate of fuel consumption. It was scary, and a close thing. I think we had about a cup full of gasoline in our tanks when we landed at Tinian.

We had other close calls, but perhaps the closest was over Osaka. This was one of the early incendiary strikes and we were again late over the target. We could see big fires on the ground in the target area, but we drove in straight ahead on our briefed heading and altitude (6000). We hit a tremendous thermal updraft that threw us around like a leaf. Before we knew it the plane was on its back at 12000 feet and seconds later , nose down heading straight for the ground. It took every bit of strength and skill that John D. and Chuck had to pull us out at about 2000 feet. The same thing happened to several other crews in our squadron and I'm sure that we lost more than one crew that way.

During the spring came VE day and although we had a big celebration, we all felt it didn't mean much as far as we were concerned. We had no idea of the realities of the Japanese situation at that time. It was actually desperate, but from our perception, the war in the Pacific might go on for years.

The 9th Group's worst night was our strike on Kawasaki. Kawasaki is a suburb of Tokyo, located between Tokyo and Yokohama. Flak was intense and our bomb run carried us right through a huge wall of fire. We lost four crews that night, two of them from the 5th Squadron.

We didn't take heavy combat losses by 8th AF standards, but most of the time when we did lose a crew, we never knew what happened to them. They simply disappeared into the night and we never heard from them again. That was the case of the two crews

our squadron lost at kawasaki.

Often, when we returned from a low level incendiary strike, we would find bits of charred wood, or scraps of Japanese newspapers that had been blown up into the bomb bay over the target by the tremendous thermal updraft. One time we got back about the same time as the "Ready Teddy", Tom Bowen's plane which was parked on the hardstand next to the "Go'in Jessie". As we were unloading, and getting ready to get on the truck to take us to our intelligence debriefing, Tom spotted a scroungy looking little dog playing around the hardstand. He picked it up and carried it with him to the debriefing.

After every mission we went through this debriefing procedure. The group intelligence officer, Bud Johnson. would ask us where we got flak, where were there search lights, where we dropped our bombs, etc. He would then use this information to brief crews on subsequent missions as to the location of guns, etc.

Bud went through his usual routine with Tom sitting there with the dog under his arm. Finally, when he finished, he looked over at Tom and said "Okay Bowen, what's with the dog" Tom replied, "well Bud, he blew up into the bomb bay over the target" Bud, of course was sophisticated enough to know that Tom was trying to pull his leg. However there were several reporters in the room, including one from Life Magazine and they weren't so sophisticated. We didn't think much about it at the time, but after we had finished our missions and had returned home on leave to Portland, we were startled to see in the August 13th 1945 issue of Life magazine a story about the Japanese dog that had blown up into the bomb bay of a B29.

One of the most important tasks given the 313th Wing (composed of the 9th , 6th and 504th Groups) was to mine the deepwater harbors of Japan, the entrances to the Inland Sea, and the Shimonoseki straits. We flew several of these missions, including one to the Shimonoseki straits, and Sasebo and Niigata harbors. We dropped both magnetic and sonic mines which we were told were virtually unsweepable.

The mining campaign was very successful, shutting down Japanese shipping almost completely. I don't ever remember hearing it called this at the time, but I've since read that the navy called this "Operation Starvation". I'm sure it was a major factor in the defeat of Japan.

The "Goin Jessie" ended the war with a record unmatched in the 20th Air Force. It flew over 50 combat missions (35 flown by us) without an abort. The 9th Group received Distinguished unit citations for the attack on Kawasaki, and for the mining of Shimonoseki straits.

We finished our missions on July 23, 1945. Tom also finished on that day or shortly afterwards because we were on the same plane

going home a couple of weeks later.

Our orders were to a rest camp in Hawaii, but we were able to manipulate letter orders sending us straight through to Hamilton Field. After a couple of days there and a weekend in San Fransisco, Tom and I were on the train to Portland.

We arrived on Aug 6, the day the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. As far as we were concerned this was the best kept secret of the war. The 509th Group which dropped the bomb was based on Tinian, and although we knew they had some sort of a special mission, we had no idea what it was.

The War ended as suddenly as it had begun, and everyone was clamoring to get out of the service and go home. The services devised a priority system for discharge based on a "point" system. I don't remember now exactly how it worked, but one point was given for every month on active duty, two points for a month of overseas duty, so many for combat missions, etc. Both Tom and I had more than enough to get out right away.

After our 30 day leave in Portland, we went back to Santa Ana (it seemed like coming full circle for me) and after about 30 more days we were discharged. The great adventure was over.

I have attached the following exhibits:

1. 9th Bomb Group "Record of Combat Duty"
2. My personal record of combat missions with letter from Chuck Chauncey attached.
3. Orders awarding Distinguished Flying Cross.
4. Letter of commendation from Gen Davies.
5. Orders dated 21 Dec 45 and 7 Feb 46 awarding distinguished unit citations.
6. "Personal Flashbacks of WWII by Chuck Chauncey.
7. "Operation Starvation" an article written by Richard Hansen, historian for the Naval Minewarfare Assn about the mining of Japanese harbors by the 313th Wing.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D
RECORD OF COMBAT DUTY

Crew No. _____

Position _____

Name Crewer John F 2nd Lt 020409/8 1038
(Last) (First) (M.I.) (Grade) (ASN) (MOS)

Organization: 5th Bomb Sq, 9th Bomb Gp

Date left continental U.S. 10 Jan 45 Authority P 1 Ops 0 16, No Father Fld,
Calif

Date	Total Combat Flying Hours	Crew Credit Sortie Hours	Number Crew Credit Sorties	Months on Duty	CUMULATIVE TOTALS					
					Total Combat Flying Hours	Crew Credit Sortie Hours	Number Crew Credit Sorties	Months On Duty	Initial On Entry	Int By Crew Membr
1945										
9 Feb	7:20	7:20	1		7:20	7:20	1		ad	FC
12 Feb	7:15	7:15	1		14:35	14:35	2		ad	FC
19 Feb	14:35	14:35	1	1	29:10	29:10	3	1	ad	FC
Total	29:10	29:10	3						ad	FC
9 Mar	15:00	15:00	1		44:10	44:10	4		ad	FC
14 Mar	15:10	15:10	1		59:20	59:20	5		ad	FC
16 Mar	14:15	14:15	1		73:35	73:35	6		ad	FC
18 Mar	14:15	14:15	1	1	87:50	87:50	7	2	ad	FC
24 Mar	15:05	15:05	1		102:55	102:55	8		ad	FC
30 Mar	15:00	15:00	1		117:55	117:55	9		ad	FC
Total	88:45	88:45	6						ad	FC
12 Apr	16:30	16:30	1		134:25	134:25	10		ad	FC
15 Apr	13:10	13:10	1		147:35	147:35	11		ad	FC
22 Apr	14:30		1		162:05		12		ad	FC
26 Apr	13:45		1		175:50		13	3	WC	FC
28 Apr	14:15		1		190:05		14		WC	FC
30 Apr	14:45		1		204:50		15		WC	FC
TOTAL	86:55		6						WC	FC
10 May	14:40		1 Shikoku		219:30		16		WC	FC
13 May	15:40		1 Niigata		235:10		17		WC	FC
18 May	14:10		1 Shimonesaki		249:20		18		WC	FC
22 May	14:35		1 Shimonesaki		263:55		19		WC	FC
24 May	15:35		1 Iwaking		279:30		20		WC	FC
26 May	16:35		1 Fukuoka		296:05		21	4	WC	FC
TOTAL	91:15		6						WC	FC
1 Jun	14:45		1 Osaka		310:50		22		WC	FC
5 Jun	14:15		1 Kobe		325:05		23		WC	FC
15 Jun	14:15		1 Osaka		339:20		24		WC	FC
17 Jun	13:00		1 Yokoeichi		352:20		25		WC	FC
19 Jun	14:10		1 Fukuoka		366:30		26	5	WC	FC
22 Jun	14:00		1 Kagurigahara		380:30		27		WC	FC
26 Jun	13:50		1 Nagoya		394:20		28		WC	FC
28 Jun	14:00		1 Woji		408:20		29		WC	FC
TOTAL	117:15		8						WC	FC

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

RECORD OF COMBAT DUTY

1. SQUADRON 5th

CREW NO. _____

POSITION	NBR
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100	100

NAME	Cramer	John	F	1 Lt	02060948	1038
	(Last)	(First)	(M.I.)	(Grade)	(ASN)	(MOS)

Awards-Decorations Granted AM & 2 OLC

Date left Continental U.S. 19 Jan 45

AUTH: P 1 Opns 0 16, Mather Fld, Cal

00 # 03.2

(2)

May 20, 1992

Dear Mary & Jack —

I do hope that you like your jackets. The only thing that I didn't have was our 5th Squadron patch to go on the right shoulder and the American Flag patch for the left. Unless Carpi has sold them all he should have them. Since Mary is a great seamstress I'm sure that she will sew them on for you Jack.

Surprises never cease Jack. I was searching for some of my accumulated service flying time only to find your hand written list of our bombing missions! They were tucked in back of my 201 Records file. I am really disappointed in my self that these had never been returned to you. I do apologize and please forgive me for such a derelict of responsibility. 47 years - wow!

Gotta hustle this off to UPS and get started on all my honey-dos as we are leaving Friday for Georgetown CO for a few days.

Sincerely,

Chaunce & Mary says Hi!

1. "TRUK" } shakedowns February
2. Iwo Jima } "Goin' Jessie"

3. Feb 19 Tokyo — ALT 28,000' Bomb load 5,000# Bombed by Radar Flak MEager & accurate 15 Fighters; not aggressive. Results 1 square mi Tokyo Burned. One bullet hole in nose First Empire mission For Ninth Gp — Four crews from 5th Sq. Flew with 504 "Goin' Jessie" 14:30

4. March 9 — Tokyo — ALT 6400' Bomb load 12,000# ~~incendiary~~ incendiary clusters. Bombed visually — over target 0210 light Flak, moderate and inaccurate. Six night fighters — two fired and followed 100 mi out to sea. 300 B29's participating 16 sq. mi destroyed 15 sq. mi Tokyo destroyed. 15:00 "Goin' Jessie"

5. March 13 — Osaka — ALT 7700' Bomb load 16,000# incendiary clusters Bombed Radar — over target 0233. Bombed from in the soup — clouds glowed red from fires below Flak light, meager & inaccurate — Two night-fighters chased us 100 miles out to sea. Fired on by Jap Naval vessels 50 mi from land. 15:03 9 sq mi destroyed "Magnificent Abortion"

6. March 16 — Kobe ALT 7100' Bomb load 12,000# incendiary clusters, frag cluster. Bombed radar and visually. Flak meager & inaccurate. One night fighter observed but no attacks. Turbulence terrible over the target — Forced to salvo half our bomb load. Target area covered by flames — we observed several large explosions as we pulled away from target. Total time 14:50 over target 0525 12 sq. mi destroyed. "Goin' Jessie"

Flew into the fire cloud which had blown down our bomb, in course, then a 2 1/2 wing burst and the camera was torn from its mounting. Jessie flew about 12 mi. lower from then on without increasing nose pressure.

7 March 18 - Nagoya - Bomb load 13000# 100# oil incendiary
Bombs Away 0402 Flak meager and inaccurate - no night
fighters - many searchlights. Total Time 14:15 alt 7,000
"Goin' Jessie"

8 March 24 Nagoya - Mitsubishi Aircraft Engine Plant -
Bomb load 29 500# incendiary Clusters. ^{Alt 7,300'} Over target
at 0155 on three engines - feathered #4 at 0055.
Flak intense, generally accurate. Seven search light
on us at once on bomb run. One night fighter observed
but no attacks. Total Flight time 15:05. "Goin' Jessie"

9 March 31 - Mining Mission - Target outer Sasebo Harbo
^{Alt 7,000'}
load - 6 2000# acoustic and magnetic mines. Results
very good. Over Jap mainland 1:20. One fighter observed
no flak or searchlights. Mines away 0240. Time 15:00
"Goin' Jessie"

10 April 12 - Target, Chemical plant at Koryama. Bomb load
15 500# dems Alt 7500' Bombs Away 12:50 No Flak,
2 fighters observed but no attacks. Our bombs hit.
4000' short even though visibility good. Total Flight
time 16:30. "Goin' Jessie"

11 April 15 - Target - Industrial Area of Kawasaki, suburb
of Tokyo. Bomb load 35 500# incendiary clusters 1500
Gp 1 photo flash bomb. Bombs away ^{Alt 8,000'} 0005 (we
actually bombed Yokohama). ^{Alt 8,000'} Opposition fierce - Flak
from light & medium guns intense - we had one
fighter attack. No battle damage to Jessie. 9th Gp lost
4 crews - including R. B. Jones our next door neighbor.
Total Flying time 13:05. "Goin' Jessie"

12(a) April 22 - Target Itanoya Airfield - Southeastern Kyushu. Part of interdiction campaign to prevent Jap fighters from staging from these fields - direct tactical support of sea & land forces at Okinawa. Bomb load 19 500# G-P's, fuses from instantaneous to 24 hr delay. Bombing Altitude 15,500'. Bombs away 0444 - results excellent. Flak moderate, generally inaccurate - two fighters made passes, but broke away out of effective range - Total flight time 14:30 "Ready Freddy"

12(b) April 26 - Target Miyazaki Airfield - Southeastern Kyushu. Bomb load 19 500# G-P's, fused from instantaneous to 36 hr delay. Bombing Altitude 15,500'. Weather forecast inaccurate - bombed by radar - 18 ship formation Capt Hobough leading. Results unobserved. No enemy opposition. Total time 13:45 "Go in Jessie"

14. April 28 - Target Kokubu Airfield - Southeastern Kyushu. Bomb load 24 500# G-P's, fused from instantaneous to 36 hr delay. Bombing Altitude 14,500'. Bombed visually with excellent results. No flak - Several fighters made very close in attacks. Bombs away 1011. Total time 14:15

15. April 30 - Target Hamamatsu. Bomb load 19 500# G-P's. Bombing Altitude 21,000' - Bombs away 11:55 - visual. Results unobserved. Flak meager and inaccurate - rope dispensed. Several fighters pressed close in attacks - No battle damage to Jessie. Buddied Capt. McClintock to Iwo - his fuel ~~the~~ transfer system damaged. Total time 14:45.

16. May 10 - Target MAISUYA Airfield - Northwestern Shikoku. Bombed visually, 10 ship formation led by Lt. Ashland. Results excellent. Load - 12 1000# GP's. Flak moderate, generally inaccurate. Many phosphorus shells - no fighter attacks. Total Time 14:40 - "Goin Jessie".
17. May 13 - Super Dumbo. Rendezoused with Lifeguard Submarine 25 mi off southwest coast of Shikoku - From 01:40 to 03:37 (May 14). No business - VHF full of Navy task force chatter. Total Time 15:40. We monitored five different frequencies - carried two radio operators. - "Sad Tomato" (285).
18. May 18-19 - Mining Mission. Shimonooseki Strait 6 2000# Mag. & sonic. Mines away 0213. Several searchlights - no flak or fighters observed. 2nd ship back in GP. (1 min after #1). Total Time 14:10. "Goin Jessie".
19. May 22-23 - Mining - Shimonooseki Straits 6 2000# Mag. & acoustic. Mines away 0238. Searchlights mod. flak. Total Time 14:35. "Goin Jessie".
20. May 24-25 - Mining - Niigata Harbor ~~7~~ 7 2000# mines. Mines away 0222. No Flak, fighters or searchlights. Total Time 15:35 "Goin Jessie".
21. May 26-27 - Mining - Fukuoka Harbor. 7 2000# mines. Mines away 0308. Spotted flattop, heavy cruiser and several smaller vessels in harbor. Lost #4 0315 and sweated gas all the way home. Total Time 16:40 - "Goin Jessie".

22. June 1 - Osaka - ALT 18,000'. Bomb load 30 500[#] incendiary clusters, 1 500[#] frag cluster. Bombs away 11:53. 421 B-29's bombed primary. Flak moderate to heavy, generally inaccurate. Fighter opposition light, due to our P-51 escort — 1 Jap fighter broke through to our formation. Smoke clouds up to 27,000' by the time we reached target. Total time 14:45
"Goin Jessie"
- 23 June 5 - Kobe - ALT 14,000' Bomb load 31 500[#] incendiary clusters. Bombs away 0908. Flak from assembly point til we crossed the coast — Flak over target moderate and accurate. Fighter attacks heavy and aggressive. We made one damage claim. Saw one B-29 rammed by Jap fighter. The weather was the worst we've ever encountered, but assembly went off fairly well. Total time 14:15.
"Goin Jessie"
24. June 14 - Osaka - ALT 29,000'. Bomb load 30 500[#] incendiary clusters. Target completely socked in — we made an individual radar run. No fighters or flak. Bombs away 11:07. Total time 14:00 - "Goin Jessie"
25. June 17 - Yokkaichi. ALT 7600'. Bomb load 184 70[#] incendiaries. Bombed by radar. Results excellent. Bombs away 0320 Total time 13:00 (This was the "Goin Jessie's 35th mission)

26. June 20 - Fukuoka ALT 8400' Bomb load 184 70th incendiaries. Bombed visually. Bombs away 00:48. No fighters — flak moderate & inaccurate. We bombed this target in conjunction with the 73rd Wing. Total time 14:00. "Goin Jessie".
27. June 22 - Aircraft Ass. plant - Gifu. Bomb load 34000th G.P.'s. Bombed visually (< $\frac{5}{10}$ cloud coverage) Bombs away 10:38. Flak moderate and accurate. Fighter opposition very aggressive. One Hamp broke away 25' from us. Total time 14:00. "Goin Jessie"
28. June 26 - Aircraft Plant - Southwestern Nagoya. Bomb load 7 2000th G.P.'s. Bombs away 10:24. Forced to bomb by Radar because nose wasiced over. Flak was moderate and accurate — no fighter attacks. SEVERAL VERY CLOSE calls with other B-29's. Total time 13:50. "Goin Jessie"
29. June 28 - Moji - Bomb load 39 450th incendiary clusters Bombs away 02:44. Bombed by radar. Flak meager and inaccurate — no fighters. We took off 38 minutes late — big send off by Gen. Davies, Col. Eisenhart & Col. Haglin. Total time 13:55 "Goin Jessie"
30. July 3 - Himeji - Bomb load 40 450th incendiary clusters. Bombs away 0240. Bombed visually-radar approach. No fighters — flak meager & inaccurate. Burned out 97% of town. Total time 14:00. "Goin Jessie"

31. July 6 - Shimizu - Bomb load 39 450# incendiary clusters. Bomb Away 0310. Bombs by Radar - Thunderhead obscured aiming point, but we hit target - we were lost over the target - no flak - no fighters. Total time 13:55 "Goin Jessie".
32. July 9 - Wakayama - Bomb load 184 70# incendiary - including the "2,000,000th ton of bombs dropped by the AAF in this war." Bombs Away 0118. No fighters - Flak meager & inaccurate. Bombed visually - radar approach. Total Time 13:15. Cdr. Luschen rode with us. "Goin Jessie".
33. July 16 - Numazu - Bomb load 40 450# incendiary clusters. Bombed by Radar - good run. Flak meager and inaccurate - no fighters. Total time 13:25 "Goin Jessie".
34. July 19 - Choshi - Bomb load ~~40~~ 39 450# incendiary clusters, 1,500# frag cluster. Flak meager and inaccurate - no fighters. Bombs away 0208. Total Time 13:10 "Goin Jessie".
35. July 24 - Tsuru - Bomb load 30 500# GPs Bombed by Radar - we flew dep. lead. Bombs Away 1150. Bad weather forecast. No fighters. No flak. Total Time 13:30. Goin Jessie's 46th.

(General Orders No 21, this hq, dd 3 Aug 45, contained XX Sections)

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH AIR FORCE
APO 234, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

GENERAL ORDER 3)

4 August 1945

NO. 22)

SECTION I

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS--By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 2 July 1926 (Bull 8, WD, 1926), and pursuant to authority delegated by Headquarters United States Army Strategic Air Forces in classified letter, file 323, subject: "Delineation of Administrative Responsibilities", dated 16 July 1945, announcement is made of the award of the Distinguished-Flying Cross to the following named officers and enlisted men of the 24th Bombardment Squadron, 6th Bombardment Group:

For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on 5 June 1945. These individuals were combat crew members of a B-29 aircraft based in the Marianas Islands, on a daylight, medium altitude, incendiary strike against vital industrial facilities in the city of Kobe, Japan. On the target approach, their formation met heavy, accurate, intense flak. They sustained hits in the tail assembly. Also encountered by the squadron, were twenty fighter attacks which were determined and aggressive. Nevertheless, this crew maintained close formation and pressed home the assault, contributing materially to the destruction of over four square miles, or twenty-eight percent of the built up portion of the city of Kobe. By their coordinated teamwork, skill, courage, and devotion to duty, these crew members, veterans of more than twenty-three combat sorties, aided in inflicting severe damage on the enemy and reflected great credit on themselves and the Army Air Forces.

First Lieutenant GEORGE W KING, 044453, Air Corps, United States Army, as Navigator.

First Lieutenant WILLIAM E REED, 0869163, Air Corps, United States Army, as Flight Engineer.

First Lieutenant DONALD A STUEBE, 0926941, (then Second Lieutenant) Air Corps, United States Army, as Radar Gunner.

Flight Officer LAWRENCE C BYERS, T8121, Air Corps, United States Army, as Bombar-dier.

Technical Sergeant MAX R REED, 36591573, (then Staff Sergeant) Air Corps, United States Army, as Central Fire Control Gunner.

Staff Sergeant ROBERT W WEBER, 36351130, (then Sergeant) Air Corps, United States Army, as Radio Operator.

Staff Sergeant FRED L UNCLESBUCH, 35479187, Air Corps, United States Army, as Right Blister Gunner.

Staff Sergeant ROBERT W ALLEN, 31389308, Air Corps, United States Army, as Left Blister Gunner.

Staff Sergeant JAMES F DEBONO, 12076300, Air Corps, United States Army, as Tail Gunner.

4 August 1945

General Orders No 22

Staff Sergeant JOSEPH W RYAN, 33804533, (then Sergeant), Air Corps, United States Army, as Radar Gunner.

Staff Sergeant JOHN W PIERCE, 15105132, Air Corps, United States Army, as Radio Operator.

Technical Sergeant EDWARD C ROACH, 39582490, (then Staff Sergeant), Air Corps, United States Army, as Central Fire Control Gunner.

Staff Sergeant ROBERT K RYAN, 32948905, (then Sergeant), Air Corps, United States Army, as Left Blister Gunner.

Staff Sergeant JOSEPH MAJESKI JR, 33799156, (then Sergeant), Air Corps, United States Army, as Tail Gunner.

SECTION IX

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS--By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 2 July 1926 (Bull 8, WD, 1926), and pursuant to authority delegated by Headquarters United States Army Strategic Air Forces in classified letter, file 323, subject: "Delineation of Administrative Responsibilities", dated 16 July 1945, announcement is made of the award of the Distinguished-Flying Cross to the following named officers and enlisted men of the 5th Bombardment Squadron, 9th Bombardment Group:

For extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight on 24 March 1945. These individuals were combat crew members on a B-29 aircraft based in the Marianas Islands on a night strike against the Mitsubishi Aircraft Factory at Nagoya, Japan. Approximately two hours after take-off an engine malfunctioned. It continued to give power, though less than normal until approximately 200 miles from the target. Then the propeller governor failed and, as excessive oil had been used the engine was feathered. In spite of the increased danger and greatly diminished safety factor in engine power, they determined to make a bomb run at a slower than briefed air speed. They made this decision fully aware that the target was heavily defended and that damage to another engine would probably necessitate a ditching in enemy waters or bail-out over hostile territory. Disregarding these dangers, the crew pressed the attack and made a radar bomb run, with results that were extraordinary. Because of excellent navigation and cruise control the crew was able to return directly to base after flying for nine hours on three engines. These individuals have completed more than thirty-one combat sorties. Their devotion to duty and daring under hazardous flying conditions reflect great credit on themselves and the Army Air Forces.

First Lieutenant CHARLES G CHAUNCEY, 0774544, (then Second Lieutenant), Air Corps, United States Army, as Pilot.

First Lieutenant JOHN F CRAMER, JR., 02060949, Air Corps, United States Army, as Navigator.

Second Lieutenant JULIUS J CHILIPKA, 0783040, Air Corps, United States Army, as Bombardier.

Technical Sergeant FRANCIS PRUSKO, 12026596, Air Corps, United States Army, as Flight Engineer.

HEADQUARTERS 1313th BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO #247, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

J.D/clw

2 Mar 1945

SUBJECT: Letter of Commandation.

TO:	1st Lt John D. Fleming O-798115	S/Sgt Enrico E. Roncace 33694566
	2nd Lt Charles G. Chauncey O-771514	Sgt Robert J. Waldron 16190269
	2nd Lt John F. Cramer O-2060948	Sgt James Brandt 31280979
	2nd Lt Julius J. Filipka O-783040	Sgt Donald L. Scribner 31409505
	T/Sgt Francis Krushko 1026596	Sgt Charles W. Rice 33514587
		S/Sgt John G. Goldman 36722766

THRU: Commanding Officer, 9th Bombardment Group,
APO 247, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California.

On the 24th of March, 1945, your crew participated in a combat mission to the Japanese mainland. The target was Nagoya. You experienced some trouble with an engine and when about 200 miles from the mainland, complete power failure on that engine. In spite of the known handicaps in continuing with only three engines, you completed your assigned duty and obtained excellent results, displaying admirable tenacity of purpose and determination which exemplifies the high traditions of the Army Air Forces. I wish to commend you for your determination and attitude, which is exemplary, and reflects great credit upon you and your organization.

A copy of commendation will be placed in your 201 file.

J. H. DAVIES
Brigadier General, U. S. A.
Commanding

5
R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

HEADQUARTERS NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 356, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

GENERAL ORDERS)

21 December 1945

NUMBER 32)

SECTION III

DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE-- Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, WD, 1943, as amended by section III, Circular 311, WD, 1945, the following Officers, Flight Officers and Enlisted Men, 5th Bomb Sq, 9th Bomb Gp, are awarded the Distinguished Unit Badge, pursuant to the following citation contained in Section III, General Orders No 115, Headquarters Twentieth Air Force, dated 23 November 1945:

The 9th Bombardment Group (VM) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. This Group was directed to mobilize a maximum force to attack and destroy the industrial area of Kawasaki, Japan, on the night of 15-16 April 1945. The target represented a highly important link in the component productive capacity of the enemy upon which industries in Tokyo and Yokohama depended. Because of its strategic location between two heavily-defended areas, the objective was strongly guarded by masses of defenses both on the flanks and in the immediate target area, making the approach, the bomb run and the break-away from the target extremely hazardous. Through their efficient, coordinated, and unceasing efforts, the maintenance crews readied thirty-three B-29's for the take-off.

The flight to the Japanese Empire was made at night at low level by individual aircraft over long stretches of water remote from friendly bases, requiring the utmost in physical endurance and superior technical skill. All planes kept well on the course despite severe turbulence which interfered with the functioning of mechanical navigational equipment. The 9th Bombardment Group (VM) was last over the target, and the enemy defenses were fully alerted to the approximate bombing altitude and direction of attack. As a result, exceptionally close coordination between enemy searchlights and heavy and light anti-aircraft guns brought the bombers under powerful concentrations of continuously pointed fire on the route to the target, over the objective, and on the breakaway. Intense and extremely accurate fire from flak boats on the flight to and away from the target added to the fierce opposition. The enemy air defenses were heaviest in the target area. Fifty-six hostile fighters, many of which made aggressive attacks, and a number of suicide planes were encountered. Two interceptors were shot down in flames, attesting to the accuracy of the Group's gunners. Four B-29's were lost and six received severe damage from enemy air and ground defenses while fighting their way through to strike the vital target. Through the great courage and unyielding determination of the combat crews in destroying this target and the skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 9th Bombardment Group (VM) contributed to the ultimate defeat of the enemy, reflecting great credit on themselves and the Army Air Force.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

HEADQUARTERS
NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 6)

7 February 1946

SECTION I

DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE — Under the provisions of Section JV, Circular 333, WD, 1943, as amended by Section III, Circular 311, WD, 1945, the following Officers, Warrant Officer, and Enlisted Men, Headquarters, 9th Bomb Group, are awarded the Distinguished Unit Badge, pursuant to the following citation contained in Section XII, General Orders No. 13, Headquarters Twentieth Air Force, dated 23 January 1946:

The 9th Bombardment Group (VM) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the Japanese enemy for the period 13 May 1945 to 23 May 1945. During this period, this group, with consummate skill and high daring carried out a lone extensive and highly effective aerial mining operations in the enemy's vital Shimonoseki Straits area and in the strategic harbors of Northwest Honshu and Kyushu. In these operations, the group demonstrated the strategic potential inherent in aerial mine-laying, blazed the trail for subsequent mining operations by developing precision techniques and highly successful tactics, and contributed significantly to the eventual complete blockade of the key water passages into the enemy's Inland Sea and the isolation of the important Japanese northern ports and harbors. During this period the 9th Bombardment Group flew a total of 209 mining sorties in eight effective missions. Attacking their targets every other night, averaging flights of 2900 miles over great expanses of trackless ocean, frequently through extensive areas of adverse and unpredictable weather and in defiance of enemy anti-aircraft fire and fighters, the air crews of the B-29's, performing with exemplary courage, precision, and technical skill, ninety-two percent placed of the 1425 mines expended precisely in the predetermined strategic location. All mines were dropped from low altitudes averaging 5500 feet. The concentrated and rapid tempo of the operations is illustrated by a series of three successive missions which were flown by the Group. On 18-19 May 1945, eighteen aircraft successfully mined the Inland Sea approached to the Shimonoseki Straits. On 20-21 May 1945, twenty-two aircraft mined the outer approaches to the Straits, with four aircraft remaining the inner approaches. Again, on 22-23 May 1945, the Straits were the target for thirty aircraft which dropped mines accurately in the briefed area. The Shimonoseki Straits area was the second most heavily defended zone in the Japanese Empire, since it was the main channel of entry for all shipping from China and Korea into the highly strategic Inland Sea, and a virtual life-and-death key-point in the enemy war economy. The main attack of the 9th Bombardment Group was against this arterial waterway. Flying through hazardous concentrations of enemy defenses, solving difficult navigational problems,

and developing and employing new modern mine-laying techniques with uncanny skill, the Group dealt grave and gripping blows to the movement of Japanese shipments of food, raw materials, manufactured war supplies, troop elements, and combat equipment both to and from the enemy home islands through the Shimonoseki Straits. The personnel of the 7th Bombardment Group were keenly aware of the strategic importance of their assignment and contributed unselfishly to the splendid operational record established during this period. An average of 24.2 flying hours per B-29 aircraft on hand was achieved, and an average of 62.2 flying hours per air crew was logged. The ground personnel performed their duties with extreme devotion, self-sacrifice, and untiring effort. The 7th Bombardment Group by its efforts helped significantly to deny to the enemy the support of his conquered territories and of his possessions, to drastically reduce his productive power, to shut off his transport, and to curtail seriously his productive power and ability to continue the war. The combined accomplishments of the air and ground crews of this group in effecting the complete blockade of Japan bring great honor to the United States Army Air Forces and to the entire military service.

ATTACHED TO 112TH BOMB GROUP

Col Eisenhower, Donald W. O-21538

BY ORDER OF CHIEF OF STAFF

MAJOR W. W. WATSON
Major, Air Corps
Executive Officer

OFFICIAL:

/s/ MAJOR W. W. WATSON
/t/ MAJOR W. W. WATSON
Captain, A-1
Adj

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Hq 9th Bomb Gp U. S. Orders No 32 21 Dec 45 (Cont'd)
LIEUTENANT COLONEL

Brown, Melvorn H.W. 0398750 AC

MAJOR

Cox, John C. Jr. 0334507 AC
 Goode, Jack P 0342170 AC

Foley, James G. 022650 AC

CAPTAIN

Ballard, George P. 0418447 MC
 Cox, Burton E. 0724389 AC
 Hobaugh, John H. 0790666 AC
 Kent, Robert 0855660 AC
 Scheaffer, Frederic B. 0789608 AC
 Wenzel, Robert H. 0666739 AC

Chapman, Wilson M. 0442750 AC
 Elias, Samuel M. 0562942 AC
 Johnson, Fay V. Jr. 01280262 AC
 McClintock, Robert A. 0725514 AC
 Tulloch, Walter S. 0725513 AC
 Wienert, William L. 0440154 AC

1st LIEUTENANT

Ashland, Maurice L. 0523431 AC
 Bowers, Alvin F. 0675402 AC
 Tutton, Raymond N. 0735841 AC
 Van Blarcom, William A. 0870115 AC
 Cox, Claude W. 0674565 AC
 Fleming, John D. 0789115 AC
 Gray, Swinnoy D. 0574789 AC
 Jastis, Adolph M. 0866410 AC
 Klemme, Robert E. 0665693 AC
 Nash, Archie L. 0790872 AC
 Peterson, William L. 0860620 AC
 Rolston, John A. 0415468 AC

Barneyback, William G. 0745034 AC
 Collins, Charles L. 0795706 AC
 Ulroy, Wmmanuel L. 0582529 AC
 Wood, Robert S. 0862452 AC
 Doherty, James B. 0923405 AC
 Frick, Vargo L. 06677280 AC
 Hawes William G. 0664835 AC
 Jones, R.B. Jr 0725160 AC
 Napier, William S. 0864130 AC
 Patch, Nathaniel M. 01051325 AC
 Reynolds, William A. 0523122 AC
 Soderbock, Earl G. 0749342 AC

2nd LIEUTENANT

Allen, John B. 02061324 AC
 Barnes, Harold J. 01551161 AC
 Bennett, George E. 02058397 AC
 Bowen, Alexander T. 02061142 AC
 Cagan, Jack 2058409 AC
 Chancey, Charles G. 0774554 AC
 Clark, Gordon E. 01637192 AC
 Cramer, John F. Jr. 02060949 AC
 Decamarra, Joseph R. 0783046 AC
 Diffendal, Joseph C. 02056356 AC
 Dolan, William H.F. 0771344 AC
 Fee, Russell J. Jr. 0868873 AC
 Frank, Albert Jr. 0783049 AC
 Frentz, Joseph V. 0775307 AC
 Gates, Robert D. 02061366 AC
 Gerdau, Richard V. 0775317 AC
 Glick, Harvey M. 02072443 AC
 Jenks, William G. 0826981 AC
 Lindemann, Frederic C. 0827811 AC
 Martens, Helmer J. 0782933 AC
 Pullan, Edward E. 0823442 AC
 Nelson, Ronald F. 02060881 AC
 Ostling, Warren E. 0833388 AC
 Petzulas, Thomas G. 02056635 AC

Arrigo, James J. 0783020 AC
 Bates, Robert E. 0868977 AC
 Blas, Samuel W. 02057858 AC
 Brogman, Irvin 0928466 AC
 Carpi, Leonard W. 0774531 AC
 Chhillipka, Julius J. 0783040 AC
 Coughlin, George J. 02061148 AC
 Dearing, Richard B. 0774569 AC
 Dempsey, Stephen E. 0868867 AC
 Dolan, Raymond B. 0703216 AC
 Emory, Marvin C. 071676 AC
 Flocker, Dale P. 0928424 AC
 Frantz, Leonard E. 0785268 AC
 Gadake, Louis O Jr. 0771867 AC
 Gaudino, John R. 0771693 AC
 Gertenbach, Robert F. 02061368 AC
 Heiser, Warren G. 0869901 AC
 Landry, Arthur P. 0825205 AC
 Mallory, Robert W. 02073169 AC
 Miller, Alvin L. 0125821 AC
 Nelson, Harold J. Jr. 02061724 AC
 Naumowicz, Chester Jr. 02057907 AC
 Oleaszowski, Harold J. 0770749 AC
 Piclsticker, Robert J. 0570773 AC

6

Personal FLASHBACKS OF WWII

by Charles G. Chauncey

I was pilot of "Goin' Jessie", a Tinian-based B-29 in the Marianas Chain, meshed with ten other flying crew members.

Being in the upper 10% of my class in B-17 school at Roswell, NM, I, along with several others, was sent to McCook, NB, to be a member of a new crew to fly B-29's some place, but we knew not where. They were in the process of building a new 9th Bomb Group in the 313th Wing of the 20th Air Force. I was assigned as pilot to airplane commander Lt. John Fleming, of the 5th Squadron. There were just a few B-29's on the field when I arrived at McCook; however, they did have several B-17's that they were using for pre-B-29 training. In John's case, as a fighter pilot instructor, he was transferred into B-24's when they started closing down the fighter schools. He complained because his B-24 first pilot had only 400 hours so they sent him into the B-29 program as Airplane Commander -- and I drew him. It then became my duty to teach John to fly the B-17. He was a good student pilot, but a flop as a second or copilot. I believe that John thought he was too good to be a second pilot and now was just a fighter pilot in B-29's -- a demotion.

A-C John was something else -- bless his alcoholic heart -- he thought he was God's gift to womankind and he felt that Uncle Sam owed him a living for the rest of his life for being in the war (I was told that he died a drunken derelict in '83). One thing you could not take away from the John I knew was his flying ability. To this very day, I have never flown with anyone equal to him who was as smooth at the controls of a plane. He did have some 13,000 hours as a fighter pilot

instructor when I drew him as an airplane commander. He was never anything but a fighter pilot all the time I flew with him (14 months) -- would not perform the responsibilities of a copilot or a good team member; but when he was on the controls, he flew "good"!

It seemed that John consumed more oxygen on the ground sobering up to fly than in the air. On many a training mission, he would take off and land and spent the balance of flying time consuming oxygen, even when the cabin was pressurized. Overseas, he would get looped and never find his own bed unless someone took him to it; however, come the next morning -- plus two hot beers -- his mind was as clear as could be, until party time that night and the cycle began all over again.

Our first assigned navigator failed the test of proving himself on a 1000 mile round trip to Minneapolis, MN and back. About an hour after we departed McCook we ran into some bad weather that had not been forecast. We were in a severe storm for a couple of hours and were blown nearly a hundred miles North of our direct course. Our navigator was completely lost and the Group Navigator kept insisting that we were right on course. With the aid of the radio compass and visual judgement I located where we were -- they still did not know. I told them we would be approaching two good size lakes in about fifteen minutes and I wanted a new course to Minneapolis. We hit the lakes on the button and then they gave us our new course on in. It was dark when we landed and John had not made many night landings in the B-17. He flared out high and we landed with a real thud. One spectator said to me as we were walking into the terminal and headed for the tower, "You must really be carrying some heavy cargo -- that was a hard landing". I told him "Yes" without bursting out into laughter till away from him. They had a woman on the radio in the tower and John had not

used good radio procedure -- flirting with her was not allowed. So we were on our way to the tower for our reprimand. John with his Southern Tennessee drawl did not go over big that evening. We telephoned back to McCook to tell them we had landed there, and they said that they had been trying to contact us by radio and not to come back, but to stay overnight. They did not know us very well yet, as we always took advantage of a situation like that. Needless to say, we turned hands down on this navigator.

Our new assigned navigator was Lt. Jack Cramer, and he would have made an excellent lead navigator. It was to our good fortune that Jack had washed out while in advanced single-engine flying school (ground-looped his AT6 training plane while the inspectors were there). I maintain that if Jack had been as good a fighter-pilot as he was a navigator he would have been an ace in the air. On his first celestial training mission out of Havana, Cuba, he hit the first two ground leg points on USA soil 0 minutes & 0 miles and the final Havana point 0 minutes & 1-1/2 miles -- now that takes brilliance, work, and a lot of luck. Jack really got fed off with the Major who was the celestial navigator instructor for the mission. The Major would take a couple star shots and proceed to tell Jack how far off course he was, then lay down and take a snooze. By the time we were on our third leg Jack was completely full of the Major's nonsense and when he would not get off his back he called me. I told the Major to get clear away from Jack and that we did not want him speaking to him the rest of the trip. After we landed, the Major had really built up a good head of steam and was going to charge me with disrespect of a superior officer. It did my heart good to unload on him that he was not in command of the aircraft and that his superior rank was only good on the ground. He accepted his bluffing and my cussing and went on his way. Jack

always provided good on-the-spot position reports when needed. He was a superb navigator.

Bombardier Lt. Julius "Chip" Chilipka was a swell guy and a good bombardier who performed well. His home was in New York City and he did not know how to drive a car, which I guess was not too unusual. We tried to teach him to drive a jeep around the island, but after losing control and spinning out in a turn on the coral road, he never would drive again. He had nearly as much card and gambling sense as his driving ability. I could not begin to venture an estimate of the number of milk-shakes he bought for Jack and I -- he got mad, but still was a darn good sport. Jack, Chip and I became close inservice friends.

I liked all of our non-coms and they were a fine bunch of fellows. John Goldman was an art student and after settling on a name for the plane overseas he lettered our names at all our positions, "Goin' Jessie", and painted the fast rabbit. He was our Central Fire Control gunner. I was always amazed that they were not better gunners with their electronic gun sights. You could tell when they were nervous because their pattern of 50 Cal. bullet stream was a wide spray. Maybe they helped scare the enemy off though, as we never sustained any damage from bullet holes, either ours or theirs, just one little ricochet hole about three feet in front of my right knee.

On one training mission in B-17's, John had a problem with a hydraulic fluid leak on his side of the control panel. As we entered the downwind side of the landing pattern, John began to exclaim that he was getting shocked on the controls. Evidently, his shoes had become soaked with the hydraulic fluid causing an electrical ground at the controls. On the base leg John dumped to me the controls that he could not fly any longer. Trying to ascertain what and where the problem was, I had not accomplished all my copilot duties so now I had

to do both. I know that from the ground we had to appear as drunken bums in a plane when turning on to final and during the landing approach -- we were all over the place. Common sense told me that we should make a go around but fear that I might become grounded out too with the hydraulic fluid, I chose to make the best of it. I set the turbos the best I could, got the landing gear down, set flaps, all the time wallowing around on the final approach. I never had time to set up an initial approach, air speed, and get the plane in trim, as time was running out. Needless to say, it was not one of my better landings; but, then, still we made it, so what the heck.

As B-29's became available for training, we made the transition into them. They were not too hard to fly once you got used to them. Because it was the biggest bomber going at the time, they gave us pilots a little class distinction. The first pilot was called the "Airplane Commander", while the second pilot was called the "Pilot" not copilot. As pilot the distortion out the front curved glass was just the opposite of the A-C's view. To make a straight-in final approach it was necessary to correct for this distortion problem, and it always appeared initially that you were going to miss the runway when out 4-5 miles. As you approached touchdown, the runway would appear more centered and closer to being lined up. Should one try to fly final with the runway centered all the way, you would have flown a curved final approach. Also, I did not like the position of the central control floor panel that sat next to A-C's seat and across the aisle from the pilot. It housed the switches and knobs for the landing gear, flaps, pitch control, lights, and auto pilot controls. It was difficult to follow through on the controls and throttles, as backup for the A-C, and still reach this panel. Usually once airborne, I left the controls to perform my other tasks. The B-29 had such a large rudder, and none of the control surfaces were power

controlled, but one could make a perfectly controlled turn without using the rudder pedals. Gravity seemed to keep it turned just right so the ball stayed centered on the Needle & Ball instrument. It was not possible for both pilots to hold a rudder pedal in during flight. You could make a short skid, but not a sustained skid. Push the pedal in and it would pump you back out of the seat.

We had a few times that we had engine failure, but never did we lose more than one during any flight. Of course, this always added a little zest to the flight. I do recall one training flight when we were at 22,000 feet and the blister at the central fire control gunner's position blew out. Fortunately, Goldman had gone back into the radar operator's room and was there when the blister blew. The two side gunners had always been instructed to have their safety belts fastened when in their positions to keep from being blown out when a blister blew while the aircraft was pressurized.

When the blister blew, it felt to me like someone had hit me with a fist to the stomach. All the gases in the stomach immediately expand and until it is expelled, there can be a lot of discomfort. Of course, we gave the command to get the oxygen masks on and began a radio check for each position report and damage. In the gunner-scanner area where the blister blew, all loose equipment, dinners, magazines, parachutes, etc., went out the top blister. The two gunners were pulled up against their safety belts and they lost their flying helmets and seat cushions too. They told us that the air in the tunnel over the bomb bays could reach as high as 200 mph in this situation. We felt fortunate that we had no injuries or loss of personnel. I try not to think of what could have happened to Goldman had he been strapped into his position with all that junk going out his blister. We could maintain a pressure altitude of between 8-9 thousand feet if there weren't too many leaks.

We picked up our brand new Wichita B-29 at the Herrington, KS, Modification Center -- cannot remember whether it cost \$800,000 or \$1,000,000 but think it was the latter. Gee, she was a beauty -- almost love at first sight. Enroute to the West Coast we landed at Albuquerque, NM, to spend the night. We bought some wax and waxed the four huge propellers very slick -- helped our air speed too. When we left Hamilton Field, just out of San Francisco, we said our good-byes to the USA, Golden Gate Bridge, and the B-25's that were waiting for good winds so they too could fly to Hawaii. "Goin' Jessie" did not know she was gonna be named "Goin' Jessie" until we arrived at our Tinian Destination, but it was a good name.

On the first leg of our trip to Hickman Field, Hawaii, we lost an inboard engine and had to feather the prop. After our arrival they said they did not have the expertise to fix the dead engine, so they took our spare engine, which was loaded in the front bomb bay, and installed it. Naturally, the spare was destined for Tinian. We flew the plane to break-in the engine and to make sure that it was OK to continue on, which it was. On the way back to Hickman Field, John asked me to make the landing and I said sure. I never had too many opportunities to do so in the States, so I decided to bring it in low and hot. As we approached the runway, I would estimate that we were approximately 500 yards from the blacktop and 50-75 ft. high when John chopped all four throttles on me with no warning! We hit short of the runway . . . bounced like a jack rabbit over a shallow ravine up onto the runway . . . slowed down and completed the landing. Not a word was said until I cut the engines and I turned to John and said, "John, you dirty S_O_B_, I don't care if you were an instructor, the next time you pull a stunt like that on me, I'll pull these controls out and beat you to a bloody pulp!" He never said a word in reply because he knew he could

have killed us all right there. Surprisingly, there was no damage to the plane and the engine operated fine. While there, some of us slipped through the fence to look at a few sights and enjoy some drinks. We were fortunate not to be caught by the MP's -- we had no passes and were out of uniform.

We were the last plane of our 9th Group to land at Tinian because of the engine change. Shortly after taxiing into our permanent parking ramp, the representatives of the Food Service arrived at our plane. They had come after the rather large case of "C" rations stored in the rear bomb bay with our gear. We told them that they had picked it up at Hickman Field and they bought the story. Sure was good American cheese, crackers and chocolate bars for a quick snack with a beer or pop. It did not last too long, maybe a couple of months.

After getting settled into our new home, a ten-man tent, John and I strapped on our 45 pistols and went down to the flight line to formally meet our crew chief and his crew. Sgt. Klabo was in charge of the ground crew. At that time we did not know anything about them or their capabilities, so we took the direct approach. We told them that if they were good enough to work on our aircraft that they better be ready on a moment's notice to go for a ride at anytime we came to the flight line. And they were always ready to go. We wanted Klabow's name on the plane and inquired as to what name or nick name he wanted us to use, but when he would not give us one, we called him "Curly". Curly did not have a hair on his head.

While living in tents, we soon learned that before leaving on a mission, to place upon our cots all our shoes, foot lockers, and anything else on the ground. It seemed like most every day that we would have a downpour of rain which would wash the loose things out of the tent, and fill the bottom of the foot lockers with water. During one of these quick

downpours, the water would come through the tent two to four inches deep. No normal trench around the perimeter of the tent would contain a gully washer like that. Our quanset huts were great after they were completed.

The scariest night I spent was while we were still housed in tents. Headquarters had received word that we were to have a Bonzii raid by the remaining Japs on the island. Our campsite was bordered by sugar cane fields and our tent, in the outside row, was probably 200 yards from the cane field. Extra guards and machine gun nests were established all around our campsite. We all slept on our cots with our 45 Cal. Colt revolvers under our pillows. Some of the guards, one in particular, were yelling for the Sergeant of the Guard at various times all night. No one was hardly breathing, and you could hear your own heart beating. Then someone would cock his 45 colt, starting a chain reaction by several others. After cussing, discussing and finding that the initial party thought he had heard something, which he had not, every one would put their 45's back under the pillow and try to rest. Fortunately for us, the raid never came off and I do not recall of any casualties from someone going crazy or trigger happy. We had guards several nights till the threat was felt to be over.

The most difficult blind takeoff we made was during a torrential downpour of wind and rain -- a deluge. Although our runways were some 250 ft. wide and 10,000 ft. long bordered by boundary lights, we had no center stripe to follow. John was to fly by actual instruments, while I observed our runway position during takeoff. We taxied our craft into position, immediately following the plane taking off ahead of us. In an instant he disappeared from our sight into the rain because it was so dark and dense. With eyes glued to the starter, we waited for his signal to begin our roll. Fully loaded with bombs and fuel.

we knew we would need no less than 140 mph to break ground. Most departures were every 60 seconds. Under these conditions, would it be the same? Had the preceding B-29 got airborne? Would we be able to see the boundary running lights? Every course correction had to be made by decreasing the throttles on the side for which you needed to turn towards. At no time were brakes to be used because just tapping the brakes could cut your forward speed some 10-15 mph, losing precious runway. On came the signal light. John increased throttles and I backed him as normal procedure, as well as on the other controls. All I could see were two runway boundary lights at a time -- one abreast and the next forward light. John had done a good job of lining up on the runway and we were rolling straight. I called out air speeds, "40 mph . . . 50 . . . 60 . . . 80 . . . John, we're moving too close to the right . . . 90 . . . good correction . . . 130 . . . 135 . . . 138 . . . 140 . . . lift off . . . 50 ft . . . gear coming up . . . level out . . . 160 . . . auto pilot coming on . . . 180 . . . 195 . . . Engineer Presco, are the cylinder head temps ok? . . . yes . . . climb out, John . . . Jack, give us a heading to get out of this crap for a smooth ride, if possible."

I suppose the closest we came to crashing on a night takeoff was when we ran over the two middle boundary lights at the end of the runway. Orders had come down from headquarters that oil was to be taken out of the oil reserve system and offset with more bombs. We presumed that this had been accomplished when we arrived at the flight line for the mission. Curly told us that he didn't take the oil out because "we needed that oil" -- the Wright engines were noted for their oil use and seepage. We did not have time to comply so we climbed in as we were not about to abort a mission over that technicality.

On command we began our takeoff. We ran, and we ran, and now we were past the point of shutdown; on we ran, and running at full

throttle until we just smashed those two center boundary lights as we ran off the end of the runway into the darkness. Fortunately, this end of the runway was built up some 30-40 ft. high to make the runway level. We were now barely airborne and the marine camps' lights to our right appeared as if they were above us. We continued on straight out to sea with the air speed very slowly picking up. The cylinder head temperatures were climbing and getting close to being too high, yet we had to get our speed up to 190 mph before climbing. Being a pitch dark night, we could not see the water, nor did we want to. Our decision was that if we were going into the drink, we did not want to see impact, and if not we would get our air speed to climb. We determined that we flew some 40-50 miles out to sea before we gained our climbing speed and did not overheat the engines. I do not recall what fire bomb mission this was.

We flew several other types of missions such as dropping 4,000 lb. bombs at high altitude. "Goin' Jessie" must have jumped 200 ft. in the air when we released it We dropped 2,000 lb. mines by parachute in the Shiminosaki Straits and saw some big navel stuff anchored in the harbor We bombed airfields, trying to cut down the Kamikaze flights to Okinawa. On one of these our scanners missed seeing a 500 lb. bomb still hanging on a bomb rack and it fell through the bomb bay doors after they had been closed. Three of us, with our parachutes and bail out oxygen bottles, went into the rear bomb bay to see if there was any chance to get them back up. The doors, being hung so they were towed in at the rear, wouldn't budge as we couldn't overcome the slip stream on them -- that was a nice open view of the ocean at 20,000 ft.! John made a greaser of a landing and didn't scrape either door even though they were some ten inches from the ground when open We flew a Super Dumbo mission -- the plane to call if

you needed to ditch or be escorted home. We were to circle and notify our submarines in the area of the downed plane and drop them additional emergency supplies we carried aboard. We were very thankful that we had no business that day Another time though we did escort one of our planes to Iwo Jima, after it was militarily secured, that couldn't transfer fuel out of its bomb bay storage tanks. Leaving the mainland, they immediately feathered the props on the two inboard engines and went to a tight cruise control on fuel with an eyedropper. They threw out everything loose and then hacked away all the fixed weight they could break loose. Their third engine died on the final approach and the last engine died on the runway -- the plane had to be towed off. . . . We were never chosen to fly as navigator ship for the Iwo Jima based P-51's that helped over the target on some of the daylight raids.

For our Distinguished Flying Cross medal we chose a mission we made to Nagoya on a night fire bomb raid. We had lost an inboard engine some 300 miles from the target, but decided we would like to hit the target anyway. We polled the crew and they were all in agreement. Normally, we would have boosted up our air speeds to 275 mph, but were only able to get about 235 mph on the three engines. Before arriving at the target, we saw a lot of fires burning on bare ground. We were in search lights from the time we got there until we left. I guess they were having trouble aiming on the ground because of our slow speed. We did see shells pass between the engine nacelles, but we never sustained a hit. Their gunners were just leading us too far, thank goodness. That was a long, slow trip home.

Our crew was chosen to drop the second millionth ton of bombs by the Air Forces on Wakayama. The first millionth ton was dropped by a B-17(?) crew in England. This was pretty much a routine mission, except

there must have been a large electrical plant there. From the bombing prior to our arrival, there was a huge short circuit created and a large ball of fire travelled back and forth in the electric power lines. Naturally, the atomic bomb being dropped later, so overshadowed these first two milestones in intensified explosive tonnage, that no mention should probably be made. But it was an honor at the time for our crew to be selected for this mission.

To some extent I would have liked to have had my own crew but that wasn't to be. When our group began elevating pilots to airplane commanders, I was called in and advised that they were passing me by, because they were aware of John's problem. I suppose this is called a left-handed compliment for me, but that is the way it was.

Great Balls of Fire -- and I am not alluding to our general welfare or the rumored serviceman that was caught copulating through the fence at "Gook City". I am referring to the UFO's we saw during our raid the 4th of July -- that was some fire works. Actually we were supposed to be bombing a radar section of Kawasaki. Because of some heavy evasive action coming into the target, we confused our radar operator and he chose the wrong initial point. Consequently, we laid our napalm and antipersonnel bombs in Yokohama -- just missing a large hospital. Had it not been for the large bomb camera, they would not have known, and we would have remained ignorant of our error. I do remember seeing the large crimson fire cloud several miles ahead and exclaiming that I was glad we weren't going there. After coming away from our bomb drop, we observed some UFO's. I recall especially two groups of them in single file. One group of six were coming towards us from the front were at a lower altitude but their heading was taking them off to our left. The other group was more distant and they were headed in the opposite direction, but were at about our same

altitude. They each looked and appeared like a great ball of fire, but yet there was no fire trail. Also, the color was very subdued and not like a torch. They did not bother us and we did not know what they were either.

I think the mission that we flew into and through a smoke cloud over the target Kobe was undoubtedly our most difficult and lucky. I always made it my normal trek to attend the church services provided by our Chaplain. When we started these low altitude fire bomb raids, the building used for a Chapel wouldn't contain all the fellows who came for the services. We were a scared lot and I think we had reason to be -- it kind of reminded me of the foxhole confessions -- Father, if you will save me from this I promise to _____. As the fire bomb raids continued and the prime targets were getting smaller and easier, the Chapel attendance seemed to parallel the severity of the target. I did remain faithful throughout and do appreciate the sustenance received by God and His Chaplain emissaries.

We had seen smoke clouds before in daylight and they are an ominous looking cloud similar to a cumuli nimbus cloud building up. Usually after 20-30 minutes of bombing, a smoke cloud would tower to 25-30,000 ft. and still be building. The basic difference between a smoke cloud and a thunderstorm is that there is no moisture in the smoke cloud, but there are severe and tremendous updrafts and down drafts occurring -- the type that produce large hail in thunderheads.

Although it was night, we were able to see the Japanese coastline coming up. Our bomb run was to be up the bay to Kobe-Osaka, and we would be bombing Kobe by radar. After reaching the initial point which was several miles away from Kobe, we could see what appeared to be a mountain range dead ahead of us. We knew there was rugged terrain off to our right side as we were flying up the bay, but no high

mountains. We called Jack on radio advising him to what appeared to be mountains dead ahead. He replied that there were no mountains in the area and nothing abnormal showing on the radar screen.

We continued on and then realized that we were seeing clouds ahead. On first entry into them we knew exactly what it was because of the smell -- smoke off the target. The winds were blowing the smoke from the target back towards us on our bomb run. This smoke was very acrid, having a musty odor like an attic fire. More disturbing though was the additional mixture of an odor like burning chicken feathers, which was probably human flesh. All in all, it was very nauseating. We were flying along at 7,000 ft. and on autopilot. The ride kept getting rougher and rougher -- very turbulent. Bomb bay doors were opened. Then we hit these series of high speed vertical air drafts -- an updraft, followed by a down draft, then updraft, then down draft, then updraft, then down draft. We were still flying on autopilot with John maintaining the turn control and I was handling the elevator control. When we slammed into an updraft our air speed indicator would immediately slow to 160 mph and the climb indicator needle would hit the max needle stop pin -- 2,000 fpm climb -- how much faster were we climbing? Then we would go through the shear-plane directly into a down draft -- zoom, the air speed would jump to 330 mph and the descent indicator needle would hit the max needle stop pin -- 2,000 fpm dive -- how much faster were we dropping? I tried during both types of up and down drafts to change our attitude by rolling the elevator from stop to stop. It made no difference! I just could not increase or decrease speed or the plane's attitude in either the up or down draft.

Meanwhile, poor Chip was trying to work over the bomb sight. Boeing never made any accommodation for the bombardier to have a safety belt on while operating the Norden bomb sight. So when we

entered a down draft, Chip was tossed up to the ceiling -- then an updraft and he met the seat coming up and would go back to work twisting the knobs on the bomb sight. Later he said he looked at both John and I and that we had the look of terror and death, so he tried to keep his mind on his work, never to look at us again during the run. I have no idea how many of these updrafts and down drafts we went through, but it was several. As we neared the target, the smoke took on a reddish or crimson appearance. Bombs away! Moments later, we broke out of the smoke cloud, but we were in a severe dive -- maybe 50-60 degrees! We were over the wharf area and there appeared an endless number of large fire blotches all over the city. I remember one huge building at the wharf -- flames coming out of all the windows and then the roof caved in before my eyes. We leveled out and word came that the rear bomb bays hadn't salvoed. We made a sharp bank to the left over the city and salvoed again and this time they dropped out. During this whole time through the smoke cloud, we had amazingly averaged the 7,000 ft. altitude that we had entering the bomb run. We got out of there as fast as possible after closing the bomb bay doors.

I am sure that I added to the number of burnt holes in my flying suit from going to sleep with a cigarette in my mouth while flying home. After discussing the severity of the smoke cloud etc., we all began to relax for the long trip home. I think we wrangled a full cup of bourbon from the Doc after debriefing took place -- he was always good for at least a half cup. The following day we were advised that we had cracked one of the four 2 1/2" bolts that held the B-29 wings on. Wing Headquarters sent down an order that in the future no plane was to enter a smoke cloud, but fly as close as possible to bomb the target. It was thought that some of the missing B-29 crews had suffered a breakup of their aircraft rather than being shot down by antiaircraft fire

or night fighters. We also found that "Goin' Jessie" wasn't going to hop along as fast as she use to because of the distortion and overstress received. She suffered an air speed loss that amounted to about 10 mph with the original power settings.

Nearing completion of our thirty-five missions, we were ready to come home. We were given the opportunity to come back to the States and fly "Goin' Jessie" on a bond tour, but we declined for two reasons. First, they wanted us to fly our thirty-fifth mission and "Goin' Jessie's" fiftieth mission and she still had ten missions to go. This would mean a few weeks longer overseas for us. Second, none of us felt that we could handle John with his drinking problem -- nor did we want to try.

A few weeks after we returned back to the States we learned that Curly Klabo had received the Legion of Merit. We were all very proud and happy for him. Little did we know that our primary crew and the secondary crew headed by A-C Bill Reynolds, would be a part of Curly's receiving the Legion of Merit for "Goin' Jessie" completing 50 missions without an abortion. There is no question in my mind but that we had one of the finest ground crews, and they were devoted to "Goin' Jessie's" and our welfare. You should have seen them beam when we arrived back from one mission that had taken 17 1/2 hrs.

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OPERATION STARVATION

The Aerial Minelaying Campaign Against Japan To Create A Total And Effective Blockade Of Japanese Ports, Straits, Harbors, And The Inland Sea

From early 1944 on the Navy endeavored to convince the Army Air Force that the quickest way to end the war was to institute a mining blockade within Japanese home waters. The Navy argued that this tactic would not only decimate the Japanese Merchant Marine but would also contribute to a sharp reduction in shipments from Korea and the Asiatic mainland. In addition, inter-island commerce would be reduced to levels which would no longer support her heavy industries. The AAF did not agree since it considered its principal missions were to eliminate Japan's aircraft industry, reduce her major population centers to rubble, and to attack shipping of all types. Since that strategy would allow little time for mining runs the AAF was hard to convince of the desirability of allocating additional aircraft to such a project. Besides, aircraft crewmen were used to seeing immediate results of their handiwork and planting mines was a waiting game where results would not become apparent for weeks, months, or even years.

Admiral Nimitz worked hard to convince General Hap Arnold of the necessity of conducting such an operation, in spite of the AAF's objection to such a course of action. By December 1944 Tinian, in the Marianas Islands, had a well established air field from which B-29's were regularly making bombing runs on Japanese targets in Japan's home islands. It was then that Admiral Nimitz was successful in convincing General Arnold that his plan was a viable adjunct to the AAF's bombing campaign. On 22 December, 1944 General Arnold issued an order to the then Commanding General of the XXIst Air Force that mining operations would start in April, 1945 and continue until such time as Japan surrendered.

General LeMay took over the XXIst Air Force in mid-January, 1945 and selected the 313th Bombardment Wing to deliver the mines. The 313th was equipped with AN/APQ-13 radar that was well suited for such missions and modifications to the B-29's could be made at Tinian for installation of static lines to handle the parachutes. Training of crews began in February with indoctrination in the theory of aerial mining. A few practice runs were made without mines aboard to test the reliability of the radar and further train the crews followed by a number of runs using real mines. To increase carrying capacity the B-29's were stripped of all .50 caliber ammunition and crew requirements were reduced by two. The Navy established Mine Assembly Depot Number 4 on Tinian and brought in mine modification experts whose job was to modify each mine's sensitivity to the needs of the locality where it was to be planted and to whatever adjustments might be required by intelligence reports from actual use. It was the Navy's job to prepare the mines for planting while the 313th Bombardment Wing installed the parachutes and other necessary gear, and hung them from the bomb racks.

At the time of the Pearl Harbor attack Japan had about 6,000,000 tons of shipping in its Merchant Fleet and added another 823,000 tons through seizures during the early days of the war. Japanese shipyards completed 4,100,000 tons of additional shipping during the war before they were bombed out of existence. By the time Operation Starvation began almost all Japanese shipping was confined to the Yellow Sea, the Sea of Japan, and home waters with few, if any, convoys going to Formosa, Hong Kong, or Singapore and none going to the Netherland East Indies to bring back vital oil products.

PHASE I OPERATION, 27 March to 2 May, 1945

General John H Davies commanding the 313th Wing set the first attack of

aerial laid mines to begin the night of 27 March. He assigned 105 aircraft in three wings and set the release altitudes at 5,000 to 8,000 feet. At that altitude the B-29's were able to carry 12,000 pound loads. One and two thousand pound mines were loaded, about evenly divided between acoustic and magnetic. The targets were Shimonoseki Straits, Kobe-Osaka, and Kure-Hiroshima. 92 of the planes completed their missions and three aircraft were lost due to enemy action. On 30 March another 85 B-29's were sent to finish the closure of Shimonoseki Straits, mine the approaches to Sasebo, and close the southern approaches to Kure and Hiroshima. During April additional mines were dropped in areas where aborted missions had left obvious gaps. The Shimonoseki Straits field was strengthened and more mines were planted to ensure the closure of Kure and Sasebo. ;

The Japanese attempted to clear Shimonoseki Straits as soon as the mines were laid. They utilized what minesweepers were in the area but relied most heavily on suicide craft which were lightly manned and considered to be expendable. At this time no modifications had been made to the mines that would allow them to discriminate between targets. Anything that passed near by would set them off. As the campaign progressed the mines were modified to explode only in the vicinity of larger vessels. The channels cleared through Shimonoseki Straits were quite narrow and required pin-point accuracy to remove but the 313th Wing was up to the task.

During Phase I the Japanese were caught by surprise by the quantity of the mines being planted but soon developed a system of determining just where the mines had been planted by sending spotter planes to follow the planes that were planting the mines. They also had many observers stationed on land to mark the locations of the mine drops. As a result of Phase I Shimonoseki Straits was closed for from 10 to 14 days and ships passing through the strait were cut to 25% of normal traffic. General LeMay estimated that by 27 April the mines had sunk 30 ships. Post war investigators cut this to 18 ships totaling 30,917 tons.

In total, Phase I consisted of 246 aircraft missions which laid a total of 2030 mines. 5 aircraft were lost to enemy action. This completely blocked the access from the Inland Sea to the Sea of Japan and prevented Japanese Naval craft from sorties aimed at attacking American forces engaged in the invasion of Okinawa. The only major sortie by Japanese Naval forces during the Okinawa campaign was when Japan's finest battleship YAMATO sortied with one light cruiser and eight destroyers. Since the western exit was closed by Phase I mines she was forced to leave the Inland Sea by way of Bungo Suido, the eastern exit, and was soon spotted by elements of the Fifth Fleet which immediately sank YAMATO, the cruiser, and three destroyers with carrier planes.

INDUSTRIAL CENTER BLOCKADE, PHASE II, 3 May to 12 May, 1945

By the time Phase II began sufficient personnel were at hand on Tinian so that each mine to be planted was carefully set for its exact location and target. This reduced their vulnerability to small sweepers and suicide boats. On several occasions the Japanese had used explosives to clear mine fields. That had worked well in Phase I because the A-3 acoustic mechanism was too sensitive. In Phase II that mechanism was adjusted so that explosions in nearby waters would not set off the acoustic mines. In addition the newly developed pressure mine containing the A-6 pressure mechanism was now available in quantity and was considered to be unsweepable.

During Phase II the blockade was extended to Kobe, Osaka, and all the routes Japanese ships used through the Inland Sea. Shimonoseki Straits was remined and the first mines were laid in Tokyo and Nagoya. 195 sorties were flown, 1,422 mines planted, and no aircraft were lost to enemy action.

The result of this mine laying campaign was to almost eliminate any large ships passing from the Asiatic mainland or Korea to ports within the Inland Sea. Reconnaissance of the Shimonoseki Straits mine field was fragmentary due to weather conditions but it was enough to see that ship passages had been reduced to less than 4 per day while in early March Japan had sailed over forty ships per day through the same passage.

On 3 May, the first day of Phase II, 88 B-29's laid 668 mines in the approaches to Kobe, Osaka, and in Shimonoseki Strait. It was here that the new A-6 pressure mine was first used. Unfortunately one string of those mines fell in very shallow waters and intelligence was sure the mines had been recovered and the device compromised.

NORTHWESTERN HONSHU, KYUSHU BLOCKADE, PHASE III, 13 May to 6 June, 1945

As Phase I, and II were completed it was found that large mining missions with numerous aircraft were not as effective as smaller groups dropping mines more often on selected targets. Consequently the mining missions were reduced to sorties involving only 20 to 30 aircraft which mined or re-mined harbors and passage routes every other day or so.

Additionally the Mine Modification Unit took on increased importance, and the complexity of mine field planning became more acute. The Mine Modification Unit concentrated on adjusting the mechanism's to be more selective and targeted larger ships. Mine fields were plotted very carefully and each mine was pre-set for its exact location in the field so as to take advantage of the water depth.

Japanese ports in northern Honshu were also mined during Phase III because it was apparent that Japanese shipping was being diverted to more northern ports from those whose only access was by way of Shimonoseki Straits. It was observed that the ports fronting on the Inland Sea were cleared of mines more rapidly than those ports in northern Honshu, possibly because the Japanese considered these ports more important and kept greater numbers of sweepers in this area.

Japanese counter measures showed no improvement during May. They still used the caternary sweep against magnetic mines and this was not an effective sweep- ing method. In late May the Japanese tried a double caternary sweep which proved to be awkward, clumsy, and inefficient and did little to increase their ability to sweep magnetic mines. Their development of new gear did indicate that they had recovered some of our mines and analyzed the triggering mechanism. Still, it was believed that the pressure mines were unsweepable even though German prisoners of war had indicated Japan was informed of their method of operation.

From 13 to 27 May 209 planes flew 8 missions and planted 1,313 mines. During the same period reconnaissance flights indicated a daily average of 80 ships tied up or at anchor due to the blockade. It was estimated that May saw the down- ing of 85 Japanese merchant vessels totaling 213,000 tons. That was 9% of the existing merchant fleet and placed an even greater burden on the ships remaining in service. The blockade also blocked access to the shipyards that were still functional and could possibly repair those ships which were damaged. The blockade was certainly accomplishing its purpose.

INTENSIFIED NORTHWESTERN HONSHU-KYUSHU BLOCKADE, PHASE IV, 7 June to 8 July, 1945

For Phase IV it was decided that the AAF would use but a single group of the 313th Bomber Wing and change their strategy radically. Henceforth the group would fly every other night and hit many targets on each mission. It was expected that this would cause the enemy to sweep many more harbors much more often and so

spread their mine sweeping abilities even thinner. The major targets picked for this phase were Moji, Matsure, and Hesake. Moji had docking facilities and all were major convoy assembly points. Tokyo, Nagasaki, Sasebo, and the Inland Sea areas would no longer be mined on a regular basis since the closure of Shimonoseki Straits precluded Japanese use of these ports. The one exception to this doctrine was Kobe-Osaka which still seemed to have many large ships sailing from it or delivering materials.

Phase IV was complicated by problems inherent in the planning process for mine fields. Missions were planned four weeks in advance so it was also necessary to anticipate the enemies reaction to the mine plants which had been made four weeks earlier. This kept the Mine Assembly Depot extremely busy since they prepared all mines three to four weeks ahead of their intended use following a carefully detailed plan for each field allowing for water depth, ship size targeted, and other details. Minor variations in enemy reactions to mines planted resulted in further modifications to the planned mining operations, the mine fields, and the modifications necessary to the mines themselves.

It was thought that Japanese shipping would retreat from using the Yellow Sea and confine their shipping to the Sea of Japan and to make use of more ports on the northwest coast of Honshu. There were indications that Japan had found no effective method of sweeping pressure mines and that the newly modified magnetic mines were also, at least for the time being, unsweepable. In this phase logistics became a problem since there were not enough mines coming into Tinian to create a total and effective blockade.

Studies of Japanese ship movements concluded that mines should be set to go after the largest targets and let smaller vessels pass through unimpeded. This would assure that more larger ships were sunk instead of just being damaged. In the larger ports it was found that each mining mission resulted in closure of the port for at least two days and sometimes as long as four days. On the other hand, smaller ports sometimes remained closed for as long as two weeks, no doubt due to the presence of a greater number of sweepers at larger ports.

During the last week of Phase IV the enemy developed a new type of magnetic sweep gear consisting of a floating electrical loop energized by a generator carried by a small vessel. Intelligence decided that it was an effective means of sweeping for magnetic mines. It was thought that the A-5 subsonic mine could be destroyed with carefully placed explosive charges and most thought the A-6 pressure mine to be unsweepable. That thinking proved to be wrong since the Japanese had developed their own method of dealing with the A-6 mechanism. They simply had their ships proceed at very slow speed and that seemed to solve the problem.

During Phase IV the 313th Bomber Wing flew 397 missions and planted 3,542 mines with the loss of only one aircraft. Another 14 missions were flown by the 505th Bombardment Group led by Lt. Col. Charles Eisenhart. The total mines planted are included in the above total.

COMPLETE BLOCKADE, PHASE V, 9 July to 3 August, 1945

During Phase IV it was observed that Japanese shipping had been almost totally withdrawn from the Yellow Sea and in the Inland Sea there was little ship movement of ships over 1,000 tons. Moji, Matsure, and Hesaki, major ports during the Phase III operation, were now observed to be almost totally abandoned. There was some activity in small ports along the edge of Shimonoseki Straits since mining those areas was difficult due to strong currents. During

the month of June American submarines had made their way into the Sea of Japan and sank 80,000 tons of shipping before sneaking out through Tsugaru Straits between Hokkaido and Honshu. This had forced the Japanese to adopt a convoy system for ships sailing in the Sea of Japan. Before the intrusion of the American submarines Japanese ships were running to Korea and China with running and masthead lights fully lighted. They were quickly extinguished after it was learned that American submarines had penetrated the Sea of Japan.

By July American planes were flying out of Okinawa and could reach as far north as Sasabo and could easily attack shipping at Nagasaki, Shimonoseki Straits, and Tsushima Straits. Meanwhile Task Force 38 was busy sailing up and down the east coast of Japan attacking shipping, railroads, and factories in Honshu and Hokkaido. Though ferries still ran from Hokkaido to Honshu, several had been sunk by Task Force 38. Those that were still left carried coal and fish products to assist in keeping what was left of Japan's economy operating. Additional sorties into the Sea of Japan were planned for American submarines.

Enemy mine counter measures were becoming increasingly effective. The new magnetic sweep gear was very successful. Tests on Oahu had shown that the A-5 subsonic mechanism was easily swept with explosive charges. The A-6 pressure mechanism was still thought to be unsweepable, but, of course, the Japanese had found a system of defeating that mechanism. Operation Starvation had proved to have one problem, logistics. Only a limited number of magnetic mines were still available on Tinian and the supposedly unsweepable A-6 pressure device which had been incorporated in the Mark 25, Model 2 mine was in very short supply.

Shimonoseki Straits was still considered to be a prime target even though shipping through the straits had been reduced to less than 10% of the traffic observed in March. But there was a problem in keeping the mining campaign in that area strong enough to effectively blockade the Straits. The Japanese had moved new anti-aircraft batteries into the lands along the Straits which had a higher range. Many of these new guns were rapid fire guns which could bang away at almost machine gun speed. Consequently the 313th Bomb Wing asked to raise the mining altitude from which they dropped the parachute equipped mines. They believed they could still assure accuracy of placement since they had much more experience. Besides, due to the lack of reconnaissance coverage due to bad weather, no one was very sure where the cleared channels were, so a broadcast pattern of mines was probably as good as any.

The enemy was also getting better at spotting where the mines were planted as they fell. Many more people were assigned to the mine watch detail on all shores and additional planes were sent aloft to spy out the mine runs of the B-29's. Enemy sweeping efforts were also more effective than had been the case in the early days of the campaign.

It was decided that additional tactics were needed. Japanese home radio broadcasts indicated that food supplies were diminishing at a rapid rate and all of Japan was on reduced rations. This was due primarily to mines and the consequent reduction in shipping from Asia and Korea. Consequently it was decided to tell the Japanese people that they were suffering from a virtual blockade and imported food would no longer reach them in sufficient quantities for their needs. During July the 313th Bomb Wing shifted, in part, to a new job, distributing more than 4,500,000 psychological warfare leaflets over the major cities of Japan.

In addition, major ports in Korea were also mined and it was found that those ports were unable to sweep those mines as quickly as had been done in

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GOIN' JESSIE

LEFT
LEGION OF MERIT



STARS AND BARS

The top performing B-29 against Japan was "Goin' Jessie". She took off every time that she was scheduled for fifty-one successive combat missions and never once turned back to base, without first carrying out her assigned mission. Lt. John D. Fleming and crew christened her and flew her for thirty-two out of her first forty-six combat missions. Lt. William Reynolds and crew helped to keep her record intact and flew her the last five straight missions ending with the final large scale raid on the Empire 14 Aug 45. "The Jessie" had now compiled over 700 combat hours, had flown over 135,000 miles and had blasted the Jap with more than 330 tons of bombs. In fifty missions, "Jessie" was flown by seven airplane commanders, but she was maintained by only one crew chief and ground crew. In recognition of this superlative maintenance job General Spaatz decorated W/1st Engr S. Klabo, "Jessie's" crew chief, with the Legion of Merit on 1 Aug 45.